WUN AND SUN JOY

Being a Story of Love Staged in the Far Away Orient.

By WILLIAM H. OSBORNE.

The world is small, and the years go by. Time flies like the old invisible she dragon who visits the temple every hundred years. It is not so long ago that little Wun Lung and his neighbor, Fow Kee, sat at the feet of the smaller Sun Joy in the Street of the Six Hundred Full Blown Roses. Wun Lung and Fow Kee were men—or thought they were. Sun Joy was a woman. Their combined length did not exceed nine feet. Sun Joy was demure and coy and winsome. Wun Lung was lively and good natured. Fow Kee was burly and jealous and ill natured. He and Wun Lung kow-towed, as it were, at the shrine of Sun Joy—and at that shrine, so it would seem, Wun Lung had the inside track. And for that Fow Kee would pull Wun Lung's short, soft pig tail—and Wun Lung would simply laugh.

But Wun Lung had something beside his good nature to recommend him—and that something made him much admired by little Sun Joy and much envied by Fow Kee. For Wun Lung, although he never realized it for many years, was a natural born acrobat. Many believe that feet were made to walk upon. With Wun Lung it was an even toss up as to hands, head or feet. He could wriggle like a snake in the grass. He could tie himself into a knot like a skein of silk. And he didn't keep all this to himself. For the first great event in the lives of Fow Kee and Sun Joy happened on the day when, under the admirable tuition of Wun Lung, they each were able to walk from end to end of the bamboo pole in the market place—the pole where the richkshaws are all lined up. And when they had learned they did the trick, not once but 20 times a day.

Wun Lung and Fow Kee, still bowing low at the shrine of Sun Joy, grew up into young men—Sun Joy grew into a young woman.

And one day something happened. Fow Kee was in trouble. Over what no one knew. He had looked upon the glowing opium too often—he had lived too hard. He had disregarded that commandment which to us is the eighth, being also the three thousand and first injunction of Confucius. In other words, he disregarded the law of private property, and one night he silently stole away. And that left Wun Lung only to kowtow before Sun Joy. But one day he too went—went in the daytime, with the good will of his neighbors in the Street of the Six Hundred Roses. He went to make his fortune in the new land favored of all lands. But he went, as he said, but to return.

In a little side street in San Francisco Wun Lung set up the inevitable laundry. And as he washed and ironed he thought of little Sun Joy and his spirits rose and he sang in his mild, quavering oriental voice, the songs of his home land. And many came to look upon him, for he had one interesting peculiarity which others of his race did not have. For if Wun Lung was on one side of his ironing board and desired to reach the other side, he merely vaulted high in the air—and there he was. He made quick little side steps over to the stove, and he whirled round and round on the ball of one foot, like a top. And he laughed as he did it.

One day a scowling, skulking Chinaman, attracted by the crowd, stuck his head inside and uttered a guttural exclamation. Wun Lung responded with a smile and a kind word. His visitor was Fow Kee. Fow Kee came in. He explained that he was rich and prosperous. He did not explain why his clothes were slightly ragged, but he did suggest that if Wun Lung could put up twenty-five American dollars he could make Wun Lung a rich man. Wun Lung put them up and waited to become rich. Fow Kee disappeared. Time flew. Wun Lung moved to Chicago. The crowd there admired him also. He explained that his name, Wun Lung, really meant Agile Gibbon. It was in Chicago that he again met Fow Kee. This time Fow Kee looked prosperous, but he still scowled. If Wun Lung had not become rich on that twenty-five it was apparent that Fow Kee had. Fow Kee watched some of Wun Lung's antics about the laundry with considerable interest. In the gathering dusk he whispered in Wun Lung's ear. Wun Lung grew wide-eyed in surprise. The next day Wun Lung shut up shop.

In the Imperial theater in the metropolis, the headliners were the Kee-Lung troupe—the Chinese (not Japanese mind, but Chinese) grotesque acrobats. They had been running for four weeks and were still popular. The troupe consisted only of Wun Lung and Fow Kee. The stage was rigged up like a Chinese laundry and what they did was done there—even to the mild quavering songs of the inimitable Wun Lung. When they had first started, Fow Kee, whose evil mind strayed back to the Street of the Roses, again whispered in the ear of Wun Lung. Again Wun Lung had acquiesced—and he had done more. He had placed in the hands of one of the Chinese tongs a substantial sum of money for the transportation of the beautiful Sun Joy to America. He knew that the tong would get her here or bust. And all day long he sang of the little Sun Joy and bided his time. And so also did Fow Kee.

Sun Joy came. Fow Kee, who had inside knowledge of the time of her [illegible] the representative of the tong. He whispered in her ear that it was he who had sent the money to bring her over. She asked about Wun Lung. Fow Kee smiled and said that Wun Lung was happy—Wun Lung and his Irish-American wives. And he scowled and smiled as Sun Joy uttered a low voiced exclamation of despair.

At last Wun Lung and Sun Joy met, with enthusiasm on one side and much reserve on the other. Fow Kee hung around for a time, but finally was compelled to leave them alone. And then Sun Joy burst forth and told Wun Lung about his Irish-American wives. Wun Lung smiled. The wives belonged to Fow Kee, not to himself. And so he told Sun Joy. And she believed him and was glad.

And Sun Joy joined the troupe—and she was a strong drawing card. The Kee-Lung-Joy Chinese Acrobats held their place at the top of the program. And Sun Joy learned. She had not forgotten the bamboo rod in the market place. But she clung to Wun Lung and rebuffed Fow Kee. She was a queen in her way, was Sun Joy, and Fow Kee was afraid of her. But he thought if Wun Lung was out of the way it would be a good thing—a very good thing. But the troupe made money. Fow Kee got the most of it, but Wun Lung and Sun Joy had plenty, too.

High up in the laundry on the stage was a tight wire which was supposed to be an indoor clothes line. The wire was not ten feet—it was 25 feet above the hard boards of the stage. All three of the troupe danced upon this wire. Fow Kee was not altogether graceful and he generally was afraid, and the other two had most of the applause. Wun Lung especially made a hit.

One night before the curtain rose, Fow Kee with his own hands moved the real iron stove over to a point directly under the wire. A man falling from above upon the stove might be crushed to death.

It was at the very climax of the act. The three were upon the wire. Sunddenly, by an almost imperceptible movement, Fow Kee jerked his elbow into Wun Lung's side. Wun Lung braved himself, grasped at the air, tottered and fell. He was a little fellow and he did not weigh overmuch. Fow Kee smiled and scowled. But little Sun Joy darted forward and caught Wun Lung as he fell. This, too, destroyed her balance, but with her other hand she clung to the wire. And there they hung, in mid-air. Fow Kee now grasped the situation. He did not want her harmed, and he saw she would cling to the last gasp. And anyway if they did fall now it was likely that they would light on their feet. He therefore waved his hand lightly to the audience and stooping down, by main force lifted Sun Joy and Wun Lung back to the wire. The audience, who thought it was a new trick, laughed and applauded. But Sun Joy, who had seen it all, did not laugh. Nor did she laugh later when she saw Fow Kee shake a bit of white powder into Wun Lung's tea.

But she did laugh the next day when she and Wun Lung, in a luxurious palace car, sped west from danger into safety, sped on thier hasty wedding trip back to the beautiful street of the Six Hundred Full Blown Roses. Back to the Imperial theater a scowling Chinaman was trying to do the Kee-Lung-Joy act all by himself. He didn't do it well and the crowd knew it. "Bring on the little Chink and the little girl," they yelled.

Inadequate.

Strickland Gillilan, the lecturer and the man who vaulted into fame by his "Off Ag'in on Ag'in, Finnigin," verses, was about to deliver a lecture in a small Missouri town. He asked the chairman of the committee whether he might have a small pitcher of ice water on the platform table.

"To drink?" queried the committeeman.

"No," answered Gillilan, "I do a high-diving act."—Everybody's Magazine.

How He Knew.

The president of the Anti-Nicotine league approached the stranger who was puffing on a pipe.

"My dear sir," began the president, "do you know that tobacco makes a man unhealthy, idiotic, short-winded and paralytic?"

"How do you know?" demanded the smoker.

"How do I know?" said the president. "Why, I was an inveterate smoker for ten years."

One Exception.

"It makes me sick to hear the silly things men are saying to that homely old girl over there!"

"Mercy! don't you know who that is? That's Elnora Squeers, the great heiress! Five millions in her own name!"

"Oh, is that it? Now I remember that I saw her picture in the paper the other day."

"Yes, everything flatters her except her pictures."

Good System.

"Old man, you always look bright and cheerful."

"Think so?"

"You certainly always look cheerful. Have you no troubles?"

"Yes; I have troubles, but I never sympathize with myself."

He Didn't.

"Henry, do you [illegible] me?" she de[illegible]

[illegible] a question."

[illegible] me, Henry!"